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Senate

The Senate met at 9 a.m., and was called to order by the President pro tempore [Mr. THURMOND].

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Lloyd John Ogilvie, offered the following prayer:

Almighty God, on this National Day of Prayer, we join with millions across our land in intercession and supplication to You, the Sovereign Lord of the United States of America. As we sound that sacred word "Sovereign," we echo Washington, Jefferson, Madison, and Lincoln along with other leaders through the years, in declaring that You are our ultimate ruler. We make a new commitment to be one Nation under You, God, and we place our trust in You.

You have promised that if Your people will humble themselves, seek Your face, and pray, You will answer and heal our land. Lord, as believers in You, we are Your people. You have called us to be salt in any bland neglect of our spiritual heritage and light in the darkness of what contradicts Your vision for our Nation. Give us courage to be accountable to You and Your commandments. We repent for the pride, selfishness, and prejudice that often contradict Your justice and righteousness in our society.

Lord of new beginnings, our Nation needs a great spiritual awakening. May this day of prayer be the beginning of that awakening with each of us in this Senate. We urgently ask that our honesty about the needs of our Nation and our humble confession of our spiritual hunger for You may sweep across this Nation. Hear the prayers of Your people and continue to bless America. In Your holy name. Amen.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The able acting majority leader, Senator LOTT of Mississippi, is recognized.

Mr. LOTT. Thank you, Mr. President.

SCHEDULE

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, today, there will be a period for morning business until the hour of 10 a.m. Following morning business, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 1664, the immigration bill. Under the consent order of last night, there are several amendments remaining to the immigration bill. With the cooperation of those Members who have amendments still to be offered, it is hoped that we will be able to stack any votes ordered on those amendments. It is possible that those votes will not occur prior to 12 noon. Following the disposition of the amendments, there will be 30 minutes of debate, to be followed by a vote on the Simpson amendment, to be followed by a vote on invoking cloture immediately after that, and then passage of the immigration legislation. All Senators can, therefore, expect rollcall votes throughout today's session.

I understand that there are a number of Senators who have reserved time for comments during morning business that will begin now. It will go on until 10 a.m. Mr. President, I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CAMPBELL). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will now be a period for the transaction of morning business for not to extend beyond the hour of 10 a.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for not to exceed 5 minutes each. Time has been reserved by Senator BURNS, Senator

GRASSLEY, Senator GRAMS, Senator DORGAN, and Senator BINGAMAN. The Senator from Montana is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BURNS. I thank the Chair.

AMERICA ON MY MIND—THE GAS TAX

Mr. BURNS. Mr. President, 3 years ago, President Clinton raised America's taxes in the misguided effort to reduce the Federal budget deficit. He claimed that it was time for the rich to "pay their fair share," but as usual, the middle class felt the brunt of his tax hikes.

Mr. President, with the gas prices soaring to record levels, I rise today with America on my mind to call for the immediate repeal of the punitive and regressive gas tax hikes that you put in place and the Democratic Congress in 1993 forced on America in the name of "fairness."

You see, I do not believe that it is fair to force families, and especially families that have to have a certain product or item for agriculture, who are in charge of producing the food and fiber, the very necessity of America, to get the taxes hiked on them around 30 percent just to pay for programs like AmeriCorps while ignoring the real problems like welfare reform, saving Medicare, or our criminal justice system.

Since 1992, his 4.3-cents-per-gallon tax increase has generated over \$11 billion for the Federal Government. It has come directly out of the pockets of America's families. I believe it is time to put that money back.

President Clinton is inconsistent. In 1993, he raised America's taxes claiming he cared about the deficit, but

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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when it came around to 1995, he vetoed a budget that would have balanced the budget. The President's plan is more taxing, more spending, more rhetoric. It is time to stop taxing, time to stop spending, and it is time to stop the rhetoric and help America's families keep more of their take-home pay in their back pocket.

In the State of Montana, we have quite a lot of dirt between light bulbs in that part of the world—148,000 square miles, 850,000 people. People rely on their automobiles in Montana as much as those who live in a big city, maybe more so. We also have a very healthy tourist industry that thrives there. That is based on fuels and the availability of fuels. So families and agriculture suffer from the high gas tax, and so do businesses. The price of processing, the price of transportation for all the products that are produced in rural America, significantly adds to the expenses. They cannot always be passed on to the consumer. America's families and businesses are hurt by this tax.

The truth is that President Clinton raised the gas tax for purely political reasons. He had a choice of cutting spending, but he chose not to do it. He had an opportunity to forgo a regressive and punitive tax on the middle and lower class, but he chose not to do it. I believe it is time to fix this political mistake by not only eliminating the 4.3-cents-per-gallon gas tax, but also increasing the family's take-home pay with a \$500 per child bonus. We need other tax cuts for families.

We are in a time when the cattle market is really low. We have farmers suffering. And, of course, yes, the grain market is very high. But if you want to do something for agriculture and take out the sort of "pockets of pain," we should look at income averaging again, allow agriculture at the production level to keep some of their money in their pockets during the time when it is profitable so they can ride out the rough years that will come—always come—in agriculture.

We promised to do that for the middle class. That was vetoed. All rhetoric. It is time to lessen that tax burden, not only to working families, but all Americans. In an era when he proclaimed big Government is over, Government keeps on growing.

So with America on my mind this morning, I call upon all of us to take a look at this gas tax, to cut Government spending, and to get our country back on a budget that will keep us fiscally responsible and fiscally solid. I thank the Chair and I yield the floor.

Mr. GRASSLEY addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Mr. GRASSLEY is recognized for 5 minutes.

(The remarks of Mr. GRASSLEY pertaining to the introduction of S. 1721 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senator from New Mexico has 5 minutes.

Mr. BINGAMAN. I am pleased to yield to my friend for any statement he has and take my 5 minutes after that.

Mr. WELLSTONE. I thank the Senator from New Mexico for his graciousness.

(The remarks of Mr. WELLSTONE pertaining to the introduction of S. 1722 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. BINGAMAN addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to speak for up to 8 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(The remarks of Mr. BINGAMAN pertaining to the introduction of S. 1723 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. GRAMM. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

LESS GOVERNMENT AND MORE FREEDOM

Mr. GRAMM. Mr. President, today is a very special day for Texans this year because as of today, May 2, working men and women in Texas are for the first time in 1996 working for themselves. To this point in 1996, every single day from January 1 until today, every penny earned by the average working family in my State has gone to government, and only beginning today are the working families of Texas working for themselves and for their families.

Let me share these numbers with my colleagues because I think they are very revealing of a fundamental problem in America.

By the estimates of the U.S. census the average family of four in Texas today earns \$42,570. This year that average Texas family will pay \$9,522 in Federal taxes, payroll taxes, and income taxes being taken out of their pocket and being brought to Washington and spent. They will also pay \$4,781 in State and local taxes. In total, the average family of four in Texas this year will pay \$14,303 in taxes out of an income of \$42,570.

If in 1950, someone had predicted that the day would come when working families in Texas would be sending \$1 out of every \$3 they earn to government, no one in 1950 would have believed that could be possible. I remind my colleagues that in 1950 the average family in America with two children sent \$1 out of every \$50 it earned to Wash-

ington, DC. Today the average family in America is sending \$1 out of every \$4 it earns to Washington, DC. And the sad, and to a certain degree, untold story is that, even if we do not start a single new government program during the next 20 years but simply pay for the government we have already committed to, the average family in America will send \$1 out of every \$3 to Washington within 20 years, and \$1 out of every \$2 in 30 years. That is a future that, at least standing here today, it is hard for me to imagine. But I think the sobering lesson is who could have imagined in 1950, when the average family in America with two children was sending \$1 out of every \$50 to Washington, DC, that today, 46 years later, the average family in America would be sending \$1 out of every \$4 it earns to Washington, DC.

I will leave it to each American to try to answer the question as to whether they are getting their money's worth from our government, whether, if they got to keep more of what they earned, they could do a better job spending it on their own family and investing it in their own future, than the government is now doing. I believe that the answer that most Americans would give is that, if they got to keep more of their own money to invest in their own children, that they could make a sounder investment both for themselves and for their children than their Government is now making.

Texas is a blessed State in many ways. But one of the ways we are blessed is that our tax burden at the State and local level is lower than the national average. So it will be on May 7 that the average American family will work for itself for the first time in 1996. But today is the first day of 1996 that working families in Texas will be working for themselves. From this point on during the year of 1996 they will be able to keep what they earn to invest in their future and their family.

I believe it is a national crisis that the average working family in Texas has worked from January 1 until May 2 simply to pay tribute to government. I do not believe the government we are giving them is worth what they are paying for it. I think we need to dramatically revise government spending, and cut it. I think we need to let working families keep more of what they earn.

There is one institution in America that is more effective and more important than any other. And that institution is the family. It is the institution that provides cohesion to our society, it is the institution that passes on our values and our traditions to our children, and yet it is the one institution that we consistently starve of the resources they need to do this job.

So I just simply wanted to join the people of my State in celebrating the fact that as of today they are working for themselves. For the last 3 years the tax burden on the average Texas family and the average American family has